

A **Scout's Own** service is a non-denominational interfaith prayer/meditation service conducted by Scouts for Scouts and reflects the Scout Law that a Scout is Reverent. Older Scouts can be more involved in planning the service. According to Baden-Powell, the purpose is to provide "...a voluntary uplifting of their hearts by the boys in thanksgiving for the joys of life, and a desire on their part to seek inspiration and strength for greater love and service for others."

Tips for conducting a Scout's Own Service:

- Choose a setting that lends itself to the occasion such as an outdoor chapel or a wonderful view on a camping trip.
- Keep in mind the Scout law (Courteous, Kind, Reverent) and remind participants that Reverent also means being respectful of others' spirituality and traditions.
- Plan and rehearse it.
- Everyone should have an opportunity to participate. This can include singing, a responsive reading, or moments of silent reflection. Do not put people on the spot by asking them to read or reflect verbally in front of everyone. Ask for volunteers if you'd like to make it interactive.
- Be aware of your unit's unique makeup and provide opportunities for people to share their faith traditions.
- Bear in mind the ages and attention spans of the youth involved in the service.

Some sources of materials for Scouts Own Ceremonies:

- The Internet – many people have shared their ceremonies and books.
- Copies of ones you have attended
- Daily reflection books/magazines such as Our Daily Bread where there is a reflection with a point to ponder.
- Songs and poems
- BSA produced books and pamphlets such as the one from Baltimore Area Council's Camp Oest that contained several prior Scout's Own Ceremonies.

Here is a planning sheet from BSA: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/worksheet08182008.pdf>
You have flexibility to include as many elements (or not) as your time, setting, and age of your group allows.

Here is a ceremony we compiled for tonight's Roundtable:

Scout Vespers: An Introspective Meditation

This particular service would be good for closing an evening campfire program:

Collect/Call to Worship: Welcome everyone to our Scout's Own Service. As we take this time together may we be enveloped with peace, encouraged by our fellow Scouters, and energized to carry the Scouting spirit out into our Community. We will be meditating upon the song, "Scout Vespers".

Notes: The group could sing the song and then conduct the meditation, or have the group softly hum the tune while the readers share the meditation. After each section is read, allow a minute or so of silent personal reflection before calling upon the next reader.

Meditation on the Song “Scout Vespers”

1. Softly falls the light of day
Take a moment to reflect on something beautiful you saw in nature today.
2. While our campfire fades away
Take a moment to reflect on a happy moment you shared today with those you love.
3. Silently each scout should ask
Have I done my daily task?
What good turn did I accomplish today?
4. Have I kept my honor bright?
Can I guiltless sleep tonight?
Is there something I did today that I would like to try harder to be better at tomorrow?
5. Have I done and I have I dared?
Did I overcome an obstacle today?
6. In everything to be prepared?
Did I do something to improve myself today?

Thoughts on the Meditation:

Almost every spiritual tradition contains elements asking each of us as individuals to pause and reflect on our impact on the world and community around us. There’s a benefit in slowing down and taking time to count our blessings. There is a benefit of looking at ourselves and realizing that each day brings fresh opportunities to try again when we make mistakes. As Scouts, we are united across many nations and professed creeds in the ideal that we do our best each and every day, to do our duty, and to help other people at all times. As you reflect on this song, sung around the Scouting world, remember that you are not alone on our journey.

Benediction:

May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with you until we meet again. Amen.

The next page contains the readings spaced so that they may be cut into strips and distributed to the readers.

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